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THE REVERED JOHN LAPIERRE

AMES E WOOD





Compiled by Mrs. Ernest H. Wood, New Bern, N. C.  
For  
North Carolina Society of the  
Descendants of the Palatines

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The Reverend John LaPierre

First Minister of the Church of England to Serve  
Church in New Bern and the Several Chapels in the Parish.

The Reverend John LaPierre was ordained by the Bishop of London in 1707. "In Queen Anne's Reign, 1708," he was sent to South and North Carolina to officiate as minister of the Church of England under the Royal and Episcopal Protections. For twenty years he served a French parish named St. Dennis and assisted an English parish called St. Thomas. In 1728, he was sent to Cape Fear (New Hanover) "to settle the divine service where it had never been," becoming the first minister there, and founding St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Brunswick, and St. James's Episcopal Church, Wilmington. (See: Colonial Records of North Carolina, Saunders. Vol. 3, pages 342, 623-5, 391-2, 529-530. Vol. 4, pages 1024, 375, 404, 915. Vol. 5, page 307. "Chronicles of the Cape Fear River 1660-1916," by James Sprunt. Published by Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, Raleigh, 1916. Page 605.)

In Chronicles of the Cape Fear River 1660-1916, Mr. Sprunt says:

"The early history of St. James's parish in the town of Wilmington, is very closely interwoven with the history of the town itself. The settlement of the colony by English subjects established the ecclesiastical law of England as the law of the



Church in the colony. The Bishop of London was made the diocesan of the colony, and the province of North Carolina became thereby a part of the See of London.

"Little attention seems to have been given the religious needs of the colonists by the Church in England until the incorporation of The Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in 1701.

"It is in the records of the Venerable Society that we find the first official notice of St. James's parish. In 1736, the society records note that 'Mr. Marsden had a settlement in the parish, and being a clergyman of the Church of England, had officiated there for several years past.' We know, however, from local sources, that thirty years prior to this entry the whole province had been divided into twelve parishes, and several laws passed by the colonial Legislature for the support of religion. We also learn from the same sources that the parish of St. James was organized in the year 1730, and that in 1729 the Rev. John LaPierre, a French Huguenot, who had been ordained by the Bishop of London in 1708, and for many years had served a congregation of his own people in South Carolina, called 'St. Dennis's parish,' came into the Cape Fear region, and served St. James's and St. Philip's, Brunswick, until about the year 1735. Mr. Marsden served only about one year, when his appointment as missionary was withdrawn by the Venerable Society, and Mr. Moir was made missionary to the parish."





In his letters to the Bishop of London, LaPierre relates something of his hardships on the Cape Fear, due to friction between Governor Burrington and the people over the established church and a tax for the payment of a minister. The people resented a tax for the support of the Church of England and refused to pay the minister. LaPierre also tells of troubles caused by a minister named Marsden, who offered to officiate in the parish gratis and at the same time carried on the activities of a "public merchant and traffikant since his late voyage to Lisbon in Portugal, and follows it daily amongst us and thinks it no way inconsistent with the Sacred Orders." It is interesting to note that Mr. Marsden served the Cape Fear settlement about one year, 1736, when his appointment as missionary was withdrawn by the Venerable Society.

In 1734, LaPierre extended his operations northward to a new colony called New River "consisting of above 100 families and a vast number of children to be instructed." Prior to 1737 he located in New Bern and resided in the city until his death in 1755. He was paid from the public funds by the General Assembly at intervals from 1738 to 1755. On a number of occasions he was paid from the public funds for sermons preached before the General Assembly at its Sessions in New Bern.

In Colonial Records of North Carolina, Vol. 4, pages 263-265, is found a letter written by Alexander Garden,





commissary of South Carolina and North Carolina, to the Bishop of London: The following is an excerpt from that letter:

"So. Carolina, Charlestown  
Sept. 6, 1737

My Lord (Bishop of London)

.....The Governor & Council of that Colony (North Carolina) have it much at heart to obtain a Legal Establishment of a competent maintenance for the Clergy; but the unhappy discord, subsisting twixt them & the commons House of Assembly, about civil concerns, has hitherto obstructed it, meantime they think that the pension of f80 per ann allowed Boyd, by the Honorable Society, would be applied to the best advantage, if f25 a piece were given to the two Clergymen at Bath Town & New Berne, who are in great poverty; & the remaining f30 to some sober clergyman to be sent over to Bladen Precinct where the Governor is settled, & where he assures me his neighborhood are well disposed to join with him for making up a handsome maintenance.

A. Garden"

In the Minutes of the General Assembly held in New Bern in 1738, (Vol, 4, pages 357, 375, of Colonial Records of North Carolina) is found the statement: "There are in this province but two places where divine service is regularly performed." At the same meeting of the General Assembly f50 was paid to the Reverend John LaPierre.



In 1740 an act was passed by the Legislature for building an Episcopal church in New Bern. By an act of 1741, it is learned that the vestry had laid a tax to support a minister and that Craven County was made a parish, with the name of "Christ Church Parish." Prior to that time the parish was called "Craven Parish."

The last mention made of LaPierre in Colonial Records of North Carolina is in the Minutes of the General Assembly, January, 1755, (Vol. 5, page 307) and reads:

"To the Rev. James Reed chaplain	f10
To the Rev. John LaPierre	f20"

Before 1755 the Reverend John LaPierre, having served the Church of England in America for forty-eight years, was an old man, since he came to South Carolina in 1707. (Colonial Records of North Carolina, Vol. 3, page 624). It is highly probable that he was no longer able to carry out the duties of the parish, which included not only the work of the church in New Bern but that of the several chapels in the parish. In the latter part of 1753, in answer to an appeal from the church wardens and vestry of Christ Church Parish, the Reverend James Reed came to New Bern direct from England and served the church in New Bern and the several chapels in the parish until his death in 1777.

The Reverend John LaPierre, Huguenot pioneer of education, religion, and civilization, was the first minister of the Church of England to teach, preach, and perform the duties of the church in New Bern and its vicinity, which he did for nearly twenty years.





On coming to America in 1707, he served a parish of his own people in South Carolina for the space of twenty years until the old settlers were dead and the young people had learned the English tongue; he was then sent by the commissary of South and North Carolina to the Cape Fear region where there had been no minister before; he extended his work to New River in 1734; he came to New Bern about 1735 and lived in the city until his death in 1755.

It is said that the first Episcopal church in New Bern, thought to have been completed about 1750, was very similar to the Episcopal Church still standing at Georgetown, South Carolina, built about the same time.





One of the chapels in Christ Church Parish was located at Newport in what is now Carteret County, and another was located on Trent River in what is now Jones County.

Office of Register of Deeds, Craven County, North Carolina. Deed Book 1, page 417. (1740)

Whereas we, the subscribers, have agreed and concluded to build one house of worship, or chapel, on Trent River in Craven County in the Province of North Carolina out of one flock of cattle which a certain person hath willed and given for the same use and purpose for the use of the Palatines or Germans. Now we, the subscribers hereof, have chosen and elected Mr. Jacob Sheets, John Simons, John Kinsey, and Peter Remm for to build the same church, or chapel, for the use of the High Germans and the Church of England and the same chapel is to be built on the south side of Trent River between the ferry and John Kinsey's plantation, and the same chapel is to be 30 feet long and 20 feet wide and 12 feet high; and furthermore we, the subscribers hereof, do give unto the above Jacob Sheets, John Simons, Peter Remm, and John Kinsey full power and authority to build the same chapel, or church, as they shall see fit and convenient to build or cause to be built, and the name or title of the same church, or chapel, is to be called The Palatine Church, or The High German Chapel, as witness our hands, this second day of August, Anno Domo, 1740.

John Simons  
Jacob Sheets  
Wm. Frank  
Christian Slobboch  
George Snyder  
Jno. Letcher Miller  
Peter Andrews  
John Kinsey  
Michael Pickel  
Christian Slobboch, Jr.  
Christopher.....?  
Jacob Rezenover  
Mathew Rezenover

Jacob Fulch  
Richard Remer  
John Remer  
Dave Fulch  
Alexr. Steel (Steel)  
Michael Remm  
John Peter Remm  
Vinct. Ameet  
George Coons  
George Connequar  
Jacob Pack  
William Baren



Excerpts from letters

"Mr. Burrington to The Bishop of London.

No. Carolina, May 10, 1732.

My Lord:

.....Mr. LaPierre, a French Clergyman, has an allowance from some people at Cape Fear in this Govm which is renewed; when I wrote the former letter was told he had quit that place, but after was certainly informed he had agreed to stay another year. Dr. Marsden officiates Gratis, at a place called Onslow forty miles from his own habitation & a clergyman beneficed in Virginia preaches once a month in a precinct named Bertie on the borders of this country, this is, my Lord, the condition we are at present in in regard to ministers.....

Geo. Burrington"

(Colonial Records of North Carolina. Vol. 3, page 342.)



Excerpts from letters

"Mr. LaPierre To The Bishop Of London.

Cape Fear, Alias New Hanover

Nov. 29, 1732

My Lord:

As I am one who, in Queen Anne's Reign, 1708, was by your Lordship's most worthy predecessor sent to South and North Carolina to officiate in both at several times as minister of the Church of England under the Royal and Episcopal Protections, having for the full space of twenty years, shared my office between a French Parish named St. Dennis and an English Parish called St. Thomas under the Reverend Mr. Hazell, the Rector of same, I was at last called from this former Province to the next adjacent country named Cape Fear, or New Hanover, belonging to North Carolina where I have been already four years following my functions.....

John LaPierre"

(Colonial Records of North Carolina. Vol. 3. Pages 391-2.)





Excerpts from letters

"Mr. LaPierre To The Bishop Of London.

New Brunswick In Cape Fear  
Alias Cape Fear  
Oct. 15, 1733  
^

My Lord:

As I had the honor to have been ordained by your Lordship's predecessor in the year 1707, who recommended me to the Governor of South Carolina, Sir Nath Johnston, to entitle me to a parish called St. Dennis in a French Colony which I was to serve till the death of the old settlers who did not understand the English tongue in which they were born, I became an assistant to the Rev. Mr. Hazel in the Parish of St. Thomas near to my parish, hoping of the two nations to make but one and the same people tho' they were a distinct parish indifferently followed the English people and the French as well acquainted with both languages; and then seeing that ministerial functions were not essentially required from a French minister and hearing besides that in a province of North Carolina called Cape Fear, alias New Hanover, they wanted a minister, the inhabitants of that place sent for me and the Rev. Mr. Garden, your Lordship's Commissary, in concurrence with the rest of the Clergy did actually consent that I should go and settle the divine service where it had never been.....

John LaPierre."

(Colonial Records of North Carolina. Vol. 3. Pages 529-530.)



## Excerpts from letters

"Mr. LaPierre To The Bishop Of London

New Hanover, Alias Cape Fear In North Carolina

April 23, 1734

My Lord:

I had the honor in my last to inform your Lordship about the present state of Cape Fear both civil and Ecclesiastical. I was the first Minister of the Church of England that came to these places to preach which I did during the three years and a half ..... I went farther northward to a new colony called New River consisting of above one hundred families, all of poor people but very desirous to have the holy worship set up amongst them, Gov. Burrington and one Mr. John Williams being the first encouragers. It is a thriving place and likely in a few years to become a flourishing parish. There is a vast number of children among them to be instructed and if this place falls to my lot I shall make bold, my Lord, to send you a larger and more satisfactory account both of Cape Fear and that new place.....

John LaPierre."

(Colonial Records of North Carolina. Vol. 3. Pages 623-5.)





The Reverend George Whitefield arrived in New Bern on Christmas Eve. 1739. He received the sacrament from the Reverend John LaPierre and preached on Christmas day in the Court House. He was grieved that the minister encouraged dancing.

(Colonial Records of North Carolina, Saunders. Vol. 4, page 404.) General Assembly held in New Bern, 1738. "This House having resolved that 50 pounds be given to The Rev. John LaPierre, desire your Honors' concurrence."

(Colonial Records of North Carolina, Saunders, Vol. 4, page 375.) General Assembly held in New Bern, 1739. "This House having resolved that 50 pounds be given to The Rev. Mr. John LaPierre, Desire your Concurrence. To which the House Concurred."

(Colonial Records of North Carolina, Saunders, Vol. 4, page 915.) General Assembly in New Bern, March 1748. Legislative Journal. "We also propose that the sum of 5 pounds, for Mr. LaPierre's Sermons before the General Assembly may be increased to the sum of 10 pounds."

(Colonial Records of North Carolina, Saunders, Vol. 4, page 1024.) General Assembly held in New Bern, October, 1749. "Resolved that The Rev. Mr. John LaPierre be paid, out of the Public Treasury, the sum of Four pounds Proclamation Money, for his several sermons preached before the General Assembly this Session."

(Colonial Records of North Carolina, Saunders, Vol. 5, page 307.) Saturday, Jan. 11, 1755. Meeting of General Assembly in New Bern. "Paid to The Rev. John LaPierre f20."



Office of Register of Deeds, Craven County. Deed Book 1, page 320. 1740. John Fonville to John LaPierre: 360 acres lying in Craven County on South side of Neuse River and on South side of Batchelder's Creek.

Office of Register of Deeds, Craven County. Deed Book 11, page 122. William Norwood to John LaPierre, minister of the Gospel, one lot containing 1/2 of an acre of land known in the Town of Newbern by the No., 357, on Jones Street.

Office of Register of Deeds of Craven County, New Bern, North Carolina:

Deed Book 1, page 414. (1740)

North Carolina. Know all men by these presents that I, John LaPierre, of Craven County and Province aforesaid, Clergyman, for certain good reasons and considerations me heretofore moving have transferred, conveyed and freely set over as my deed of gift, and by these presents do transfer, convey and freely set over unto Benjamin Fordham, my son-in-law, in the county and province aforesaid, planter, and to Martha, his wife, my daughter, one hundred acres of land being part of the 360 I had of Mr. John Fonville, Jnr., for the like quantity of my lands delivered to him in Cape Fear, the which 100 acres of land lying situate upon Neuse (Jeadal) a place called Batchelder's Creek, to be admeasured, which said 100 acres of land upon the left hand of the bridge towards New Bern going to meet



Col. Wilson's marked tree and so turning to my part of my land to make up his compliments toward the land remaining in the possession of the said John Fonville, and the said Fordham's house and present improvements both to be comprehended in the said 100 acres of land. To have and to hold the said 100 acres of land unto the said Benjamin Fordham and to Martha, his wife, and their heirs forever as a free deed of gift, the quit rents accepted in due proportion by the said John LaPierre, who for himself and his heirs doth promise to warrant and defend the said premises unto the said Benjamin Fordham and Martha, his wife, and their heirs against any person or persons laying claim thereunto so that they may be free from all molestation in all peaceful enjoyment, in witness whereof the said John hath hereunto set his hand and seal this 16th day of December, 1740.

John LaPierre                      (Seal)

In the presence of us:

Charles Adams

C. Routledge





### Benjamin Fordham

Benjamin Fordham, of Craven county, North Carolina, married Martha LaPierre, daughter of the Reverend John LaPierre. Martha LaPierre Fordham died after 1754, as she signed a deed for transfer of land in that year. The records indicate that he was married a second time and that his second wife was Alice \_\_\_\_\_

From the Colonial and State Records of North Carolina we find that Benjamin Fordham was an officer in the North Carolina House of Assembly, principally in the capacity of Mace Bearer and Sergeant at Arms from 1746 to 1775.

An old manuscript list in the Hall of History at Raleigh, North Carolina, shows that Benjamin Fordham of Craven County, New Bern Town, was a gentleman soldier in 1753.

### Benjamin Fordham, Jr.

Benjamin Fordham, Jr., son of Benjamin Fordham and Martha LaPierre Fordham, was born in Craven County, North Carolina, November 27, 1743. (Bible Record)

(1785. Will of Benjamin Fordham of Craven County. Land in Craven County left to his son, Benjamin Fordham, Jr., of Jones County.)

Office of Register of Deeds of Craven County, New Bern, N. C.  
Deed Book 26, page 233. (1785) Benjamin Fordham, of the County of Jones in the State of North Carolina, of the one part, and Leven Dixon, of County of Craven in the State aforesaid of the other part whence Benjamin Fordham, deceased, late of the County of Craven in the State of North Carolina, did and by his



last will and testament duly execute, give, and bequeath two tracts of land with their appurtenances to his son, Benjamin Fordham and his heirs and assigns.....forever, now this indenture witnesseth that the said Benjamin for and in consideration of the sum of 100 dollars by specie to him in hand paid, doth grant, bargain, and sell unto the said Leven Dickson pieces of land in Craven County beginning at an oak in William Heritage line on east side of Jemmy Creek branch.....

Benjamin Fordham  
Mary Fordham

Benjamin Fordham, Jr., lived on Trent River in Jones county, and his land bordered on Joshua's Creek also on Great Chinquopin Creek. A large dogwood tree on one corner of his plantation served as a marker between his land and that of Howell Brown. Other plantations that touched his boundary lines were those of Amos Simmons, Frederick Hargett, and Peter Rhemm. Because of the shifting of boundary lines, his home was for a short time in Lenoir county.

In Wheeler's Historical Sketches of North Carolina it is stated that in 1798 Benjamin Fordham was a member of the North Carolina House of Commons from Lenoir County; and in 1795, 1796, 1799, 1802, 1803, and 1804 he was a member from Jones county. Jones County was formed from Craven in 1779.

Reference to Revolutionary Army Accounts, Historical Commission, Raleigh, North Carolina, reveals that Benjamin Fordham of Jones County, received various items of remuneration for Revolutionary War service. The following is a copy of a voucher, the original of which is in the Hall of History at Raleigh, viz:

North Carolina       )  
New Bern District. )

No. 55

This may certify that BENJAMIN FORDHAM  
of Jones County, was allowed the sum of  
Six Hundred Pounds, sundries, (blot)nt and  
Vouchers rendered a(blott)5th day of (blott)  
one thousand seven hun(blott)ghty one.

Benj. Whitaker  
Sec.

Samuel Chapman )  
John Hawkes        )  
James Coor         ) D. AUG.





Benjamin Fordham, Jr., married Mary\_\_\_\_\_. From the family Bible, carried to Georgia in 1812 by his son, Benjamin Fordham, III, are taken the names and dates of birth of his children. There were twelve children, viz:

- A. Elizabeth Fordham
- B. Tena Fordham
- C. John Fordham
- D. Mary Fordham
- E. Ann Fordham
- F. Leah Fordham
- G. Susanna Fordham
- H. Martha Fordham
- I. Benjamin Fordham, III
- J. Alcy Fordham
- K. Caty Fordham
- L. William Fordham

A. Elizabeth Fordham, the eldest child, was born January 10, 1767. She married a Mr. Small.

B. Tena Fordham, the second child, was born December 7, 1768. Her first husband was named Blackshear and her second Williams.

C. John Fordham, was the third child and eldest son of Benjamin Fordham, Jr. He was born February 26, 1771, and died in Jones county, North Carolina, December 7, 1845. He was thrice married, first, to Catharine Koonce on April 18, 1799; second to Nancy Miller on February 13, 1816; third, to Nancy Lavender, of Dutch descent, on March 18, 1819. Nancy Lavender Fordham was born April 24, 1797, died in 1872.

Nancy Miller Fordham, second wife of John Fordham, died in travail about twelve months after marriage leaving no offspring.

John Fordham's home was on Joshua's Creek. One tract of his land extended from the Stanly (owned later by Whitakers) land in Chinquepin Township to the Kinsey land near Pleasant Hill Church.

The last will and testament of John Fordham was dated July 11, 1844, and probated at the December term 1845, and registered in the office of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Jones County, North Carolina, in Will Book "B", on page 175. In it he mentions six daughters and nine sons:

- |               |                        |   |                     |   |
|---------------|------------------------|---|---------------------|---|
| ( Children )  | 1. Leah Noble          | ( | 8. Ira Fordham      | ) |
| ( of )        | 2. Penelope Brown      | ( | 9. Jesse Fordham    | ) |
| ( Catharine ) | 3. Mary Gooding        | ( | 10. Athalia Fordham | ) |
| ( Koonce )    | *****                  | ( | 11. Jackson Fordham | ) |
|               | 4. Eleanor Koonce      | ( | 12. Nancy Fordham   | ) |
| ( Children )  | 5. William G. Fordham  | ( | 13. Calvin Fordham  | ) |
| ( of )        | 6. Christopher Fordham | ( | 14. Lewis Fordham   | ) |
| ( Nancy )     | 7. Ivey Fordham        | ( | 15. David Fordham   | ) |
| ( Lavender )  |                        |   |                     |   |



D. The fourth child and third daughter of Benjamin Fordham, Jr., was Mary Fordham, born March 8, 1773, and died December 1, 1816. She married John Stanley on December 20, 1797. He was a son of James Stanley, Sr., and his wife Winnifred.

E. The fifth child and fourth daughter of Benjamin Fordham, Jr., was Ann Fordham who was born January 2, 1775. She married Underwood.

F. The sixth child and fifth daughter of Benjamin Fordham, Jr., was Leah Fordham. She was born September 6, 1776 and died March 9, 1853. She married James Stanley, Jr., a brother of John Stanley who married her sister Mary Fordham. She moved with her husband to Georgia about 1810 or 1811.

G. Susanna Fordham was the seventh child and sixth daughter of Benjamin Fordham, Jr. She was born March 31, 1779.

H. Martha Fordham was the eighth child and seventh daughter of Benjamin Fordham, Jr., she was born February 17, 1782. She was twice married; first, to John Koonce and second to Stephen Miller.

Mr. J. C. Stanley of East Point, Georgia, and Judge Ira Stanley Chappell were engaged in writing a family history when Judge Chappell died. The book will probably be published sometime and will include Georgia descendants of John LaPierre and Benjamin Fordham.

















